

# THE TREE, THE WELL AND THE STONE

SACRED PLACES IN THE CULTURAL SPACE  
OF CENTRAL-EASTERN EUROPE

Edited by  
Wojciech Bedyński  
Remigiusz Mazur-Hanaj



in crudo

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 2011 BY

Stowarzyszenie "Dom Tańca"

"Dance House" Society – In Crudo

[www.domtanca.art.pl](http://www.domtanca.art.pl)

ul. Białobrzaska 62/64 m 4

02-325 Warsaw

POLAND

© Wojciech Bedyński & Remigiusz Mazur-Hanaj

All rights reserved

ISBN 978-83-930827-0-4

Redaction: Wojciech Bedyński & Remigiusz Mazur-Hanaj

Correction: Anna Bocheńska

Graphics: Agnieszka Brzeska

Cover design: Marcin Morawski

Cover photos: Remigiusz Mazur-Hanaj

Design, typesetting and printing: Marcin Morawski

Printed in Poland by: *Marcin Art*

This publication has received support from the International Visegrad Fund  
under the 2010 Standard Grant Scheme.



## CONTENTS

	Introduction . . . . .	7
<b>PART I</b>	<b>POLAND . . . . .</b>	<b>21</b>
	Introduction Poland . . . . .	22
	Przerośl . . . . .	29
	Czarny Dunajec . . . . .	47
	Janów Lubelski . . . . .	65
<b>PART II</b>	<b>HUNGARY . . . . .</b>	<b>99</b>
	Introduction Hungary . . . . .	100
	Máriakálnok . . . . .	111
	Tisza-kürt . . . . .	127
	Zebegény . . . . .	139
	Várvölgy . . . . .	151
	Zsombó . . . . .	163
	Tápiószentmárton . . . . .	171
<b>PART III</b>	<b>SLOVAKIA . . . . .</b>	<b>189</b>
	Introduction Slovakia . . . . .	190
	Živčáková . . . . .	197
	Červený Kameň . . . . .	209
	Staré Hory . . . . .	221
	Kokava nad Rimavicou . . . . .	231
	Stará Bystrica . . . . .	243



## THE PROJECT TEAM

### POLAND

Wojciech BEDYŃSKI, Remigiusz MAZUR-HANAJ (coordinators)

Ewa NIZIŃSKA, Iwona ŚWITAJ, Agnieszka BRZESKA, Marta GRABAN-BUTRYN, Krzysztof BUTRYN

### HUNGRY

István POVEDÁK PhD. (coordinator)

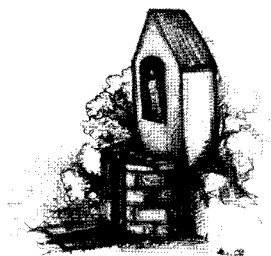
Boglárka HUFKÓ, Petra FARKAS, Vivien APJOK, György KATKÓ, Gabriella Cs. TÓTH, Zsófia TAKÁCS, Csilla JUHÁSZ, Noémi RENGEI, Balázs TÖRŐ, Zsófia PINTÉR, Zoltán Ottó FÜLÖP, Renáta ROKSZIN,

Anna KARÁCSONY, Anna SZÉKELY, Ivett SZÓLIK, Emese VARGA

### SLOVAKIA

Abdelrazak BOUALI, Dušan Hancko (coordinators)

Ivka HALASOVÁ, Pavel VARŠA, Michaela HOLÍČKOVÁ, Eva ZELENKOVÁ,  
Michaela VALENTÝNIOVÁ, Veronika DOBÁLOVÁ, Mária CIENIKOVÁ, Alžbeta MATUŠIKOVÁ,  
Beáta MATUŠIKOVÁ, Helena BÁLINTOVÁ, PhD.



# TISZAKÜRT

THE PATRONA HUNGARIAE STATUE  
IN A REFORMED VILLAGE

Vivien APJOK

## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to analyze the sacred monuments of Tiszakürt, a settlement in Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County. Tiszakürt is situated by highway number 44. The roads that connect it with the surrounding villages and the main road lead to the settlement's centre where one finds the most important monuments (commemorating revolutions and world wars). When driving from Kecskemét and by going down Petőfi Sándor street, we reach Lenin Square. This is the centre of the village and the location of the local elementary school and community centre.

The only literary monument of the settlement is near the village (it portrays Mihály Szabolcska). There are several monuments and places that are not of great importance. The

locals themselves do not find them special or unique in any way, but it is still worth mentioning them at this point. They include the *Lábfa* in the Reformed Cemetery and the artesian wells. A *Lábfa* is a marker (a gravestone) that stands at the foot of a grave. As for the artesian wells; originally there were 24. Only three working wells remain. As my informant commented "you can only make a very tasty chicken soup with this water".<sup>1</sup>

Regular events and ceremonies are connected to the monuments. People bring flowers and the monuments are covered with wreathes on special occasions. The monuments are a focal point for local remembrance.



LÁBFA

<sup>1</sup> K.T.L. Male, 54 y.o., Tiszakürt, Reformed

## THE HISTORY OF TISZAKÜRT

The first part of Tiszakürt, the '*Tisza*' refers to the river where the settlement stands. The second part of the name refers to one of the first Hungarian settlers; '*Kürt*.' The first written record of the settlement is in the deed from the Abbey of Garamszentbenedek (1075). Several archaeological excavations were carried out in the borderlands of the settlement. Artefacts from the 10<sup>th</sup> century cherish the memory of the Hungarian settlers. In the middle ages it was a royal domain, then from the 15<sup>th</sup> century it belonged to landlords. In 1552 it was occupied by the Turks and became part of the Ottoman Empire. In 1674 the settlement was taken over by the royal treasury.

The village was built on floodless high ground. In the past it was a cluster-type settlement. It was owned by the Tíga, Steössel and Bolza families by means of matrimonial affiliations. From 1952 the south-eastern part of the village separated and became an autonomous village: Cserkeszölő. Its population is Hungarian. (T. Bereczky et al. 1989:485-499)

In approximately 1566 the village converted under the Reformation. The medieval church was pulled down in 1887 and a new eclectic reformed church was built. The village Roman Catholic chapel was built in 1929. It stands on the eastern side of the village. The main gate of the church has two memorial plaques of prominent pastors (Dr. Dezső Tóth and Sándor Veres), who are still present in local memory. The Roman Catholic chapel situated in the eastern part of the settlement was built in 1929. There is a crucifix and a statue of Saint Stephen in the chapel garden.

Even today the majority of the population belongs to the reformed church. The Catholics were migrants, servants and officials. In the year 1837, 1,370 people belonged to the reformed church; 42 were Roman Catholics and four were Jewish. In 1891, 1,859 were Reformed, 974 Roman Catholic, 32 Jewish and 50 Lutheran. In 1941, 2,009 were Reformed, 3,153 Roman Catholic, 67 Lutheran, three Jewish and seven Greek Catholic. With its mostly Roman Catholic population Cserkeszölő became an autonomous settlement. At the time of the 2001 Tiszakürt census, 41% considered themselves Roman Catholics and 30% Reformed. Almost 30% of the population of Tiszakürt was not affiliated with any denominations or did not give an answer.

The Bolza family built an arboretum at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century on grounds by the reformed church and the manorial estate. Today it is a 60-hectare protected area. The Bolza Castle was built on the site where a hunting castle previously stood. The castle was collectivized in 1946. Today it is a home for handicapped people. The settlement's public buildings (village hall, community centre, nursery school, elementary school) and characteristic

houses were built at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Mihály Szabolcska, a minister and a poet, was born in the village.

The inhabitants cultivated land, herded animals and fished. From the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century they made a living by growing fruit and grapes. There's a wine vault and a tinned-fruit factory in the settlement.

A summer colony of artists has been present in the village from the 1970s. Until the 1980s it attracted wood-carvers, painters, graphic artists, enamellers and ethnographers. Today only enamellers and painters participate in the summer camp. In 2009 a local historical collection was opened.

National and state feast days (March 15th, August 20th, October 6th and 23rd), together with the communal feasts are organized by the community centre and library.

## ACTIVITIES AT LOCAL COMMEMORATIONS

Tiszaúrt has a population of 1,500 people who are able to participate in various programs. All of our informants confirm that two age groups attend the commemorations: elementary school children and the elderly. The reason is simply that the children perform at the commemorations and the elderly have the time to participate. The older generation is also personally affected as they have relatives who died in the 1956 revolution or World War II. The community centre and the library also organize community programs. People can read about these on the village website.

“Another important function of this website is to continuously inform the population living in our settlement. Inhabitants may have a fuller picture and a deeper understanding of the workings of local government, the meetings of representatives, the agendas, corporate decisions, our feasts, our programs and of the function of our institutions” – reads a text written by Mayor László Tóth on the website homepage ([www.tiszaurt.hu](http://www.tiszaurt.hu)).

All the events that take place in the town can be read about on the website under the ‘news’ link. The events are advertised on posters in the parish or an invitation letter is sent out (for instance for the ‘Meeting of Emigrants’).

Certain programs attract more people, but they are continuously struggling to have more colorful agendas to provide entertainment for all age groups. “The town hall is struggling to find ways to mobilize more and more people, but there still isn’t as many people as we would like to have,” says László Tóth.



One of the widely attended celebrations was (July 11th 2009) when the *Patrona Hungariae* statue was taken back to its original home. The locals actively attended the programs and the reformed church had an unprecedented number of worshippers who attended the festive church service.

## THE MEMORIALS OF TISZAKÜRT

### 1. STATUE OF THE PATRONA HUNGARIAE

A strong affiliation to the *Patrona Hungariae* statue is especially interesting in Tiszakürt since the Virgin Mary is fundamentally a catholic symbol. (Barna 2010) As articulated above, Tiszazug is a predominantly reformed region with a significant sense of identity. For locals *Patrona Hungariae* is intertwined with a female figure of ‘Hungarian-ness,’ a protector of all Hungarians.

In 1915 Baron Ferenc Abele wrote a letter to Count István Tisza from the front, suggesting to the Hungarian prime minister that “parliament should create a law that every village must erect a nice memorial and a grave with the names of the local hero’s who lost their lives in the war.” When the House of Representatives accepted the draft, the raising of memorials began, but the financial crisis set back the process.

On May 19th 1925, the leadership of Tiszakürt commissioned, famous Hungarian sculptor, Ede Kallós (1866-1950), to build a village memorial. It was completed two years later. The memorial was consecrated by, the Lord Lieutenant, Sándor Almássy on June 6th 1927. In accord with a law (passed in 1924), which declared the last Sunday of May the Heroes Remembrance Day, a commemoration was held regularly at the memorial until 1945.

The statue was pulled down in 1946. This was confirmed by the local Tiszakürt newspaper and by our informants. “We know that a misguided, angry member of the village pulled down the statue of *Patrona Hungariae* one night, and pulled it into the Tisza using a buffalo.” (Fekete 2010) The gist of the story is the same every time it is told: the statue was pulled down and pulled into the Tisza, but opinions differ on how, who, and exactly when it was done.

According to one set of stories, the statue was pulled down by members of the communist party in 1945 or 1946 because it was the Hungarians’ protector. It was pulled down from the pedestal by a horse and taken to the river Tisza on a wagon. There it was rolled into the water, but it refused to sink. Later it was covered with big stones and is still in the river.

According to another story-group the statue was pulled down by a horse in 1946. When it was being pulled into the water, the ground damaged it, and some pieces broke off but it

wouldn't sink into the Tisza. Maybe that night or later on, some people came and pulled it out from the water and carried it away. Maybe it still exists, but in a slightly different form. According to several people, it is in a cemetery in Kecskemét but this has not been proven.



PATRONA HUNGARIAE

According to a third story-group the statue was pulled down by the communist party. They got a rope, pulled it down using a horse and attached it to a wagon. They menaced the driver, because he didn't want to pull the statue behind his wagon into the river. It was thrown into the river from the river bank, where it was later found by divers [birds renowned for their ability to dive]. When the Tisza was low, the leg of the statue stuck out from the water. According to this opinion, the statue is not in the river anymore.

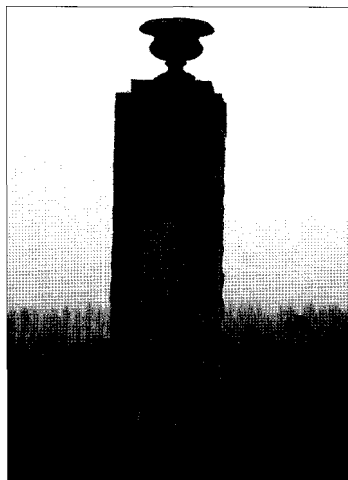
After the *Patrona Hungariae* was pulled down, villages were affected by the empty space left on the pedestal. Thus, another statue was set onto the pedestal.

It is of a mother with her child and a soldier who protects them. Locals wanted to put the *Patrona Hungariae* statue back to where it belonged but before political change came about the issue could not be openly discussed.

The question of its reconstruction was raised at the sitting of Tiszakürt's local government Cultural Commission on March 31st 2008. It was rebuilt with funding from public donations as well as the Public Utility Foundation for Tiszazug. It was sculpted by Attila Csák. "This task was a real time-travel for me, it took me back to the 1920s; the time and era of proud Hungarians. Ede Kallós was the best sculptor of the interwar period. Working after him was an honor and inspiration to me." The new statue cost 2 mln HUF and was unveiled during a ceremony held on July 11th 2009. Thus, the main square of the village is complete again with its central statue: the *Patrona Hungariae* and with the mother and her child protected by a soldier. The names of 137 heroic soldiers, who died between 1914-1918, are inscribed on the low pedestal. The Hungarians' female protector, with an iron

and a shield in her hand and a crown on her head, stands on the high pedestal. “To us this is suggestive of the message: don’t be afraid, I will take care of you!” my informant said. One of the greatest communal activities in the village’s history took place on July 11th 2009, when the *Patrona Hungariae* statue was re-consecrated. Almost all the village inhabitants participated in the ceremony and following church service.

## 2. MEMORIAL SZABOLCSKA



THE MEMORIAL  
OF MIHÁLY SZABOLCSKA

Minister and poet, Mihály Szabolcska, was born in 1861 in Tiszakürt. He spent two years in Paris and Geneva as a theologian but while sitting in the Parisian Cafés, he longed for the undistinguished everyday life of the lowland settlement. His memorial lies on the borderland of the village near highway 44. It stands on farmlands. The monument is a huge concrete pillar, with a vase shaped top. It stands at Mihály Szabolcska’s birth place. We don’t know exactly when it was erected. Our informants told us that this could have happened around 1948. According to Mayor László Tálas’s account, the statue is in an unfortunate situation, because the place where the memorial stands is not really village property. Apart from this, the highway endangers the monument. According to Mayor Tálas, the statue is quite important and deserves to be saved. If it is required, it could be moved.

Once a year, at the end of October, the village holds a Szabolcska commemoration and a wreath is laid at the monument. The memorial is even more interesting if we consider the fact that the next village – Tiszakécske - also claims that Mihály Szabolcska was born there.

## 3. THE WORLD WAR II MONUMENT

The memorial of the Second World War was built in 1991 by public subscription. A lot of communal work was involved. The imposing and modern monument is in a garden along with a wooden memorial from 1956. The history of the monument is difficult to trace, but our informants tried to give us complete description.

Village assemblies became a regular occurrence from the 1980s and several village members wanted to erect a monument for heroes who died in the war. An inhabitant of Tiszaakürt, who lost his father in the war, spoke up for the monument. László K. Tálas (arboretum director) became the memorial commission's chairman and together they endeavored to trace the dead heroes names. The memorial was created by István Novák (an architect), and built by Géza Horváth and his son Zoltán. It consists of bricks and the names of the dead heroes are on white bricks (made in Kecskemét). People lay their wreaths there on the 'village day' and on All Souls Day. Our interlocutors told us that one can always find fresh flowers at the site.

#### 4. 1848 MEMORIAL AND THE MARTYRS OF THE ARAD MEMORIAL



1848 MEMORIAL AND THE MARTYRS OF THE ARAD MEMORIAL

The 1848 Memorial and the Martyrs of Arad Memorial are in a garden with the *Patrona Hungariae* statue, opposite the World War II and the 1956 Memorials. Both were built in 2001. They were constructed under Mayor István Józsa.

The 1848 Memorial is a commemorative plaque. Wooden statues of the martyrs are behind the plaque. The wooden statues are interesting because every martyr has his own statue, including the 1848 martyr prime minister of Hungary: Lajos Batthyány. Batthyány's memorial is usually in a separate place because he was killed in Budapest. However, in Tiszaakürt all the statues are in one location. Wreathes are laid at the plaques on March 15th and at the wooden statues on October 6th.

## 5. THE WOODEN STATUE OF 1956

The first commissions were organized in 1990-1991. People knew about each others political preferences. There were several locals who did not want to celebrate October 23rd. The idea of erecting the wooden statue came from György Németh (a wood carver) and from the village. It was completed in 2002.



KOPJÁFA. THE 1956 MEMORIAL

According to György Németh, only one person from the village died in 1956 so instead of names of the fallen, he carved a general text remembering all the victims of the 1956 revolution. He told us that he accepted no financial compensation for his work. Németh wanted to erect a personal memory for the heroes and for the village.

He used motifs referring to man and women on the wooden stand. It includes a text about to whom and why it is dedicated. Besides this, it has flower motifs, the shields of Tiszakürt and Hungary and the artist's name.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, one can clearly see that the everyday life of reformed Tiszakürt is saturated with town memorials. Remembrance and the commemorations are especially important for the school children and retired folk. However, the monuments of Tiszakürt bear a great significance to town officials, local intellectuals and the inhabitants, who all have a strong Hungarian national identity. Therefore, these monuments have become sacred through the collective conscience.

The *Patrona Hungariae* statue is of special significance, which seems to be mentioned most often, together with the mysterious stories surrounding the disappearance of the statue. It is considered to be the most important and chronologically oldest monument in Tiszakürt.

We got an impression from our interviewees that town folk have a rather strong Hungarian identity while religiousness is not of great significance anymore.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barna, G. 2010. *A magyarok Máriája. Szűz Mária tisztelete Magyarországon.* [in:] *Keresztény gyökerek és a boldog magyar élet.* Budapest. s. 145-168.

Fekete, J. 2010. *Ünnepi beszéd.* [in:] "Tiszakürti Hírmondó. Független falusi krónika." 2010. no. 18. s. 7.

T. Bereczki, I. – Soós, I. – Urbán, L. 1989. *Tiszakürt.* [in:] Borka J. ed. *Adatok Szolnok megye történetéből II. kötet.* Szolnok. s. 485-499.